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Introduction

Less than a decade ago the anthropologists Redfield and Singer offered their colleagues in the social sciences a set of constructs to aid in understanding the part cities play in the development of culture. From that offering the most salient constructs, judging by usage, have been the concepts of the "great tradition" and the "little tradition." Great traditions were regarded as the stuff of civilization and as having the qualities of explicitness, systematization and reflectiveness. Little traditions were conceived of as the product of folk societies and as relatively lacking in these qualities. But such constructs as great and little traditions are mainly aids to thought, and one hardly expects to encounter them as objects of experience, particularly in the very form in which they have been postulated. Imagine then my surprise at encountering a self-conscious effort to create a great tradition, precisely as Redfield and Singer define it, among a tribal people well known for having long managed to preserve a considerable degree of distinctiveness from the dominant surrounding civilized society.

This work is in large measure an effort to understand the

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development and characteristics of this emergent great tradition. In seeking such understanding, attention has been focused on the shifting historical pressures for and against acculturation and assimilation, and on the impact of a spreading market economy, industrialization and political democracy. Though this is not at all a monograph purporting to tell all about a particular people, the events described are largely the experience of a single tribe, the Santal, who live primarily on the Chotanagpur Plateau of Bihar, West Bengal, and northern Orissa in India. This is, then, in part "their story," understood often in terms peculiar to their experience. Nevertheless, the experiences of the Santal suggest certain widely prevalent processes which I call the "rank concession syndrome." These processes are speculatively held to pertain to all part-societies which have conceded rank to a dominant surrounding society. In particular the pressures for and against assimilation are regarded as crucial determinants and these in turn are seen to depend significantly upon shifting avenues of mobility. Movements of self-conscious cultural creativity are viewed in relation to the conflicting stimuli generated by pressures for and against assimilation. There are adequate if not compelling theoretical and practical reasons for making the Santal the object of such a study. The characteristically primitive world-view and social organization of traditional Santal culture provides a sufficiently contrasting background against which to view the impact of such modern conditions as the market, industrial employment and political democracy. Similarly the heavy commitment to pursuit of pleasure and the characteristically unreflective character of traditional Santal culture contrast sharply with the dominant surrounding Brahmanical tradition. Their patterns of social interaction and group structure rest heavily upon a markedly patrilineal kinship system

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closely paralleling that of their Hindu neighbors. On the other hand, their social organization is relatively lacking in the cleavages of caste which are so prevalent all about them. Apart from the village, which is usually composed of a number of patrilineal kin-groups, territorial organization is weakly developed, and the tribe as a whole has never been politically unified so far as historical records indicate.

Even as a unique people the Santal merit special attention. Numbering today over three million, the region they occupy contains the richest deposits of iron, coal and other crucial industrial minerals in all of India. The chief source of their livelihood, at least since the nineteenth century, has been settled agriculture. Prior to the nineteenth century, hunting was also an important livelihood activity, but the great increase in the region's population and subsequent reduction of forest areas has made game extremely scarce; it is now difficult for the inhabitants even to obtain materials for fuel and building purposes. Though the chief source of food and cash is the annual rice crop, a few vegetables are also grown and some fruit trees maintained. Some villages are near enough to a river for fish to be readily obtained, while some villages stock their local ponds. Even prior to the introduction of modern industry in the region, the Santal had ceased to be economically independent. Although they once did some pottery making, weaving, and even iron smelting, they have come to rely almost exclusively on various local Hindu castes for these material products. Women from several low Hindu castes are used frequently as midwives. While almost no Santal are ritually served by Brahmin priests, itinerant Hindu holy men (*sadhu*) visit many Santal villages, consulting horoscopes and offering prayers for a fee or donation.

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to

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464 organizing principle of membership in social groups and in [178] social interaction.

It is chiefly the southern Santal from the territories adjacent to Jamshedpur who have contributed to its working force, and these are the Santal with whom I have done field work. They [167] come largely from the Dhalbhum subdivision of the Singhbhum district in Bihar, the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa, and from the former princely states of Seraikela and Kharswan, now also in Singhbhum; a few have come from the Manbhum district of Bihar, north of Jamshedpur, and from the Midnapur district of Bengal on the east.

Since Santal industrial workers live both outside and within Jamshedpur, exceptional opportunities were available to com- [121] pare separately the effects of industrial employment and living in an urban environment. Most of the Santal workers live outside the city of Jamshedpur in village-like settlements (*bustees*) of their own construction. Some of these *bustees* were formerly traditional agricultural villages, while others have grown up only since the development of Jamshedpur and the influx of industrial workers. These settlements from which the workers commute daily to Jamshedpur lie from three to ten miles from the city. The smaller number of Santal workers who live within Jamshedpur either occupy Company houses scattered throughout the town or live in one of the *bustees* within the town. [114] Though I spent considerable time with the city Santal occupying Company houses, I unfortunately did not have the time to make more than casual observations of the city *bustee* dwellers. [167] Almost all Santal industrial workers, whether living in Jamshedpur or in a *bustee*, come from native villages within a fifty-mile radius of Jamshedpur.

114 The *bustee* in which I did intensive field work, and which I
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Chapter 1 The Internal Aspect of Solidarity

121 Solidarity is a Janus-faced deity: it has an internal and an external aspect. Internally it refers to the degree of social cooperation and mutual accommodation which a society manifests in performing its normal routine. Externally, solidarity refers to the ability of a society to stand as a unit against external encroachment. These two aspects of solidarity are, of course, intimately related; nevertheless it is a commonplace that societies badly lacking in internal solidarity may pull themselves together remarkably well in the face of a real, imagined, or even contrived external threat. Since this is so, and because one estimates the extent of internal and external solidarity by different observations, it is useful to make the distinction between the two in discussing Santal solidarity.

The internal solidarity of traditional Santal society has always depended importantly on what Durkheim has referred to as the principle of "likeness,"[1] i.e., those shared cultural characteristics which serve to bind together a society. In this context one thinks first of all of those shared symbols and symbolic

[1] Durkheim 1933:136

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121 acts which represent and give recognition to existing social units. But apart from these official boundary markers, and perhaps even more important, are the "shared understandings" and the countless similar behavior patterns and similar material manifestations of behavior which characterize a people.

184 773 Among the cultural bonds which pertain to all Santal directly (as opposed to those which are exclusively the property of the various component social units of Santal society) is a myth of creation which comes as close to being an official symbol of unity and a constitution as traditional Santal society has attained. However there are numerous versions of this myth due to the wide dispersion of the Santal, and there are very few Santal who are in possession of more than fragments of a complete version. Culshaw reports that the myth is better known among the older generation and suggests that it is dying out; several ceremonies in which it is normally recited appear to be disappearing in the Bankura District of Bengal where Culshaw gathered his data.[2] Since there are also lengthy accounts of the myth in earlier works,[3] one is tempted to accept the conclusion that knowledge of the myth has declined generally. It must, however, be taken into account that it was formerly the custom to find informants who could elaborate an "authoritative" version of tradition. Also, it is often the case among the Santal, as others, that older men become specialists in ritual knowledge, so that absence of such knowledge among the young may not indicate that the knowledge is disappearing.

114 178 773

773 128 Since numerous accounts and several versions of the myth appear in the literature, only those major themes which are almost always present wherever there are Santal will be reported here.

[2] Culshaw 1949.

[3] Dalton 1872; Bodding 1942, originally 1887.

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Chapter 4 The Decline of Ceremonies

12.1 The historical works of Max Weber and the anthropological studies of Manning Nash both point up the significance of migration to industrial employment. Weber argued "that the simple fact of a change of residence is among the most effective means of intensifying labor. . . . The simple fact of working in quite different surroundings from those to which one is accustomed breaks through the tradition and is the educative force." Weber notes "how much of American economic development is the result of such factors"; similarly, he calls attention to the Jewish Babylonian exile and the migration of the Parsees to India.[1] Weber thought this change-of-scenery effect to be even more significant than new cultural contacts.

Nash's Guatemalan study confirms the significance of migration by demonstrating how little social and cultural change there may be where there is industrial employment without migration.[2] Taking Africa as his example, Nash notes that particularly "where the effects of industrialization upon [African]

[1] Weber 1958:191.
[2] Nash 1958.

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• 121 tribal peoples has been most marked, special circumstances attend the disruptions. In most of Africa, money wages and industrial work have been accompanied by the separation of the wage worker from his village, with his consequent removal from the sanctions and social controls of the tribal society."[3]

121 177 166 The pronounced cultural and social changes observed among the Santal should add to the evidence indicating the significance of migration. In addition the microscopic form of anthropological inquiry used with the Santal reveals something more of the *modus operandi* of migration to industrial employment than can be seen at the macroscopic level at which Weber operated.

Traditional Marriage Forms

177 184 583 The Santal have a number of legitimate or quasi-legitimate forms of marriage. It is the manner in which a marriage is contracted, i.e., whether or not it is arranged, and the way in which it is celebrated, which define the form. The various forms are graded by cost and elaboration of the ceremonies performed, and differ significantly in the ceremonial content. There are relatively few arranged marriages among Santal industrial workers living in *bustees* as compared to those among the Santal living in their traditional native villages. The results of my research into this difference indicate that it is the result of migration to industrial employment, that the shift to unarranged marriages among the workers is the result of weakened bonds with both kin and villages, and finally that this is the result of neither migration nor industrial employment singly, but rather of the two together.

583 192 177 The marriage form with the highest prestige and involving the greatest expenditure is known as *duar itut' sindur* ("placing

[3] Nash 1958:113.

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783 the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is
273 that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction
369 is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not
769 practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees*.

177 Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single sec-
327 tion of the city and to build their own houses, they might at least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the
369 policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles
362 which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

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182 Migration to industrial employment has acted as a socio-
464 cultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

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121 182 464 gration in producing change and, conversely, provide additional evidence of how little change may accompany industrial employment in the absence of migration. Since rural migration produces none of the effects of migration to industrial employment and since industrial employment per se does not produce the changes described either, the combination must be studied in its own right.

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Chapter 8 The Theory of the RCS

> Solidarity which comes from likenesses is at its maximum when the collective conscience completely envelops our whole conscience and coincides in all points with it. But, at that moment, our individuality is nil. It can be born only if the community takes smaller toll of us. There are, here, two contrary forces, one centripetal, the other centrifugal, which cannot flourish at the same time. We cannot, at one and the same time, develop ourselves in two opposite senses. —If our ideal is to present a singular and personal appearance, we do not want to resemble everybody else.[1]

Santal historical experience suggests certain processes which may be applicable to all encysted societies which have conceded rank to a dominant surrounding society. It is these processes which I call the "rank concession syndrome" (RCS). "Rank concession" means the acceptance of social inferiority. "Acceptance" is an unfortunately ambiguous term, for it may occur in various degrees and perhaps even in a variety of forms.

[1] Durkheim 1933:130.

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186 Nevertheless, to whatever degree and in whatever form such
121 acceptance occurs, the syndrome becomes operative.
177 The evidence of Santal rank concession is manifold. It will
186 be recalled that the earliest historical evidence shows the Santal adopting and abandoning traits on the basis of their rank value in Hindu society. The acceptance of alien rank values can hardly ensue without rank concession. The Santal themselves say that "the *diku* are big and knowing people" and their demeanor as they interact with Hindus, particularly of high caste, confirms acceptance in fair measure of their inferior status. Even today, in a period of renewed solidarity, the Santal are striving to "raise themselves" to the level of the "*diku*," as they say. The term *diku* is, of course, evidence enough of the ambivalence of the concession, and the history of Santal-Hindu relations has provided the Santal with sufficient reason to hate and fear as well as admire their Hindu neighbors. The earliest historical information indicates not only that rank concession must have begun considerably before British control, but that it was particularly pronounced among the traditional Santal elite. There is, for example, the myth of the Kisku king who became a Hindu and was forsaken by his fellows and the myth of Santal society constructed as a set of functionally specialized castes with each clan occupying a caste position.

To accept inferior status is to accept the attributes of rank of the superior society, and such acceptance produces a tendency to emulation. This emulation is an effect of rank concession, and evidence for it as well. The many examples noted of Santal emulation of the dominant Hindu society are to be understood as arising from the universal tendency of societies which have conceded rank to emulate. They may also be regarded as supporting evidence, to indicate rank concession, though rank

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177 concession can be independently observed in Santal social rela-
186 tions with Hindus as well as inferred from Santal comments about the social superiority of the *diku*.

121 Such an emulative tendency, if put into practice, may at first
177 lead to gross copying. Without internalization of emulative
186 attitudes it is not likely to accomplish its objective and results
554 in the kind of imitation epitomized by the *nouveau riche*. Such behavior appears gauche and thereby generates its own tendency toward internalization. Emulation may be directed toward attaining rank in interaction with social units belonging to the dominant society or within one's own society.

To concede that another society is more powerful is not tantamount to conceding it superior rank. Such a power concession generates its own borrowing tendencies, which might be termed "power incorporative borrowing," since it involves regarding the more powerful society's traits as possessing a special efficacy, which arises by projecting onto these traits the power of the dominant society. But while power concession does not imply rank concession, rank concession is almost always accompanied by and therefore implies power concession. Rank concession will therefore always be associated with both emulation and power incorporative borrowing. Emulation and power incorporation are often intermingled in particular acts and serve to maintain borrowed practices as well as to generate new borrowings. Power incorporation appears in its purest form in Santal curing practices, whose end is primarily curing efficacy or the belief in such efficacy, though the prestige which accrues to the practitioner who employs borrowed practices is
[755] not without significance. For example, one commonly hears Bengali and Oriya songs and Sanskritic prayers as essential elements in curing rites, though often even the practitioner

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121 177 186 554 755 does not understand the words. Such practices could hardly have been borrowed because of a peculiar "fit" of their content with traditional Santal patterns. Certainly such practices are not naturalistically more efficacious. It is rather a case of connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as "*big* and *knowing* people."

121 177 186 648 There is a third reason for the tendency to adopt practices of the dominant society, one which follows almost inevitably from the condition of being encysted. This is the "external pressure" brought to bear by the dominant society on the encysted society to adopt its customs. The basis for the near inevitability of this pressure is nothing less than the solidarity needs of the dominant society. Surrounding dominant societies must demand allegiance to at least the official symbols of suzerainty; acceptance of a number of other customs is likely also to be demanded as the solidarity needs of the dominant society increase. There are likely also to be a number of customs of the encysted society which the superior society finds repugnant, a reaction which invariably creates some pressure for "reform" of the encysted society. The pressures exerted on the encysted society may include positive rewards for compliance or coercive acts by police or even by an army.

648 782 Perhaps the oldest and most continuous of such pressures on the Santal has been governmental interference with Santal cow sacrifice and beef eating. Armed interference has been practiced everywhere and has not ceased under present democratic conditions. Cow sacrifice has continued, but in secret so as to avoid prosecution and interruption of the rites. However, some villages, fearing arrest and harassment, have abandoned such sacrifice, particularly where there are Hindus in the village who might report this activity to the authorities. There is no

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17 the emulation-solidarity conflict. Nevertheless, the cultural load tended to increase, particularly in unaltered Hindu attributes of rank value.

17 668 The new political rank path of the 1930's, with its need for increased solidarity, created enough pressure through the emulation-solidarity conflict to generate a cultural movement. Not only were serious efforts made to curtail borrowing and to abandon emulative practices, but various emulative characteristics previously absorbed were naturalized. While distinctive traits of low rank value received new emphasis, the "Great Tradition" aspect of the movement imported essentially Hindu orientations into the culture, naturalizing them by means of innovative combination with traditional customs. The most striking examples of this have been the creations of "Esteemed Guru."

• 12.1 As an aid to thought the major principles of the RCS as applied to encysted societies are succinctly listed below. However, this condensed statement has required some obvious oversimplification and is not meant as a substitute for the more discursive discussion which precedes it.

*The RCS as Applied to Encysted Societies**

1. The "cultural load" of the encysted society is inversely related to its solidarity and its ability to resist assimilation.
2. Rank concession produces a tendency to emulate; since emulation increases the cultural load, rank concession is also destructive of solidarity.
3. Emulation is likely to be of the differential variety.
4. A dominantly economic rank path decreases solidarity.

* All of the following propositions should be qualified by *ceteris paribus*.

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• |2| 5. A dominantly political rank path increases solidarity.

6. Differential emulation is more destructive of solidarity than random emulation; since the economic rank path is particularly conducive to differential emulation it is particularly destructive of solidarity.

7. Though power incorporative borrowing is at least analytically distinguishable from emulation, rank concession is always accompanied by power concession; therefore rank concession implies a tendency to power incorporative borrowing as well as emulation. (Power concession does not however imply rank concession.) Power incorporative borrowing also increases the cultural load.

8. Every society has some endogenous sources of solidarity; therefore every society that has conceded rank has an emulation solidarity conflict of some proportion.

9. Such a conflict manifests itself in a variety of characteristic ways, among which are the following:
   a) indigenous claims
   b) syncretism
   c) innovative combination
   d) pattern emulation—trait maintenance

10. An intense emulation-solidarity conflict may generate a "cultural movement."

11. A shift from a dominantly economic to a dominantly political rank path is likely to produce a severe emulation-solidarity conflict and may thereby serve to generate a cultural movement.

12. Encysted societies are subject to the following additional threats to their solidarity:
   a) political-judicial encroachment
   b) pressure to accept national solidarity symbols
   c) repugnance pressures

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Chapter 9 Implications of the RCS

[21] The force of emulation in spreading Indian culture has long been recognized in the voluminous literature on that country. Srinivas has conceptualized much of the thought on this subject in his discussion of "Sanskritization." He maintains that mobility has long been possible within the caste system, and that castes have risen by emulating high-caste behavior and high-caste restraints, such as vegetarianism and teetotalism. In his view this emulating process of Sanskritization has served to increase cultural uniformity within regional caste hierarchies and over the length and breadth of India.[1] Doubtless it has, yet without some force opposed to emulation, the very great cultural heterogeneity of contemporary India is difficult to comprehend.

The RCS suggests solidarity as the counterposed force. Solidarity is the force behind the maintenance and even the elaboration of distinctive traits; it also partially accounts for the characteristic transformation that many borrowed traits

[1] Srinivas 1952:202–227.

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undergo, since according to the RCS this transformation is a result of the emulation-solidarity conflict.

In addition to posing a countervailing force, the RCS theory holds, in contradiction to Srinivas' position, that no amount of emulation will result in higher rank in the absence of the requisite political and/or economic power. It therefore shifts attention to the condition of political and economic rank paths as fundamental determinants of cultural development in hierarchically arranged societies.

Bose has elaborated a position which in some respects parallels the RCS. He suggests, with India and Britain in mind as well as Indian tribals, that culture tends to "flow from an economically dominant group to a poorer one when the two are tied together to form a larger productive organization through some historical accident."[2] While Bose stresses the primacy of economic power rather than rank, the direction of flow, i.e., from British to Indians or from Hindus to tribals, is the same as in Srinivas' formulation. Bose remarks that economic inferiority "has sapped at the root of national self-respect," which sounds much like the result of what I have termed rank concession.[3] The primacy which he gives to economic power might be incorporated in the RCS to close it just where I have left it open; this would be accomplished by arguing that it is economic power which ultimately produces rank concession. However, it is not certain that other forms of power, particularly political power, which are partially independent of economic power, might not accomplish the same end.

Marriott has most clearly recognized that processes running counter to emulation are necessary to account for the diversity

[2] Bose 1953:351.
[3] Bose, *ibid.*

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121 which is so apparent in India. With compelling documentation he indicates not only the prevalence of great traditional Sanskritic practices at the village level but also simultaneously a tendency for little traditional, non-Sanskritic traits to retain their place. Following a suggestion of Redfield and Singer, he suggests that there is a flow upward from the little community to the great centers where the literati reside ("Universalization") as well as flow in the reverse direction ("Parochialization"). He emphasizes that transformation of what is received occurs at both levels. Adopting a cultural mode of analysis, he accounts for the maintenance of two traditions by the differing cultural screens of the two levels through which diffused traits must pass. The RCS theory suggests that solidarity pressures might also be responsible for the transformations which take place, and therefore for the maintenance of two distinct traditions. Many of the cultural variations within both little and great traditions which Marriott finds at the village level might similarly be accounted for.[4]

Much of anthropology, and through anthropology the other social science disciplines, have come to be dominated by the "configurational" theory of borrowing. This idea, made explicit and deservedly famous by Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*, suggests that what is borrowed by a culture either "fits" its configurations or is likely to be modified so as to fit. Though there is much evidence in favor of this theory, if it were the whole story, either there would be no change in cultural configurations or all such change would be essentially endogenous. Santal absorption of Hindu orientations and even of specific antipathies makes it clear that even configurations can be borrowed; a casual glance at the world today provides

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[4] Marriott 1955.

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innumerable additional examples, such as the Indians themselves and the Chinese Communists. Potentialities for rapid cultural change are far greater than the configurational process alone can take account of.

The RCS theory suggests that inherent in rank concession are the potent forces of emulation and power-incorporative borrowing, which contribute to the acceptance of "incongruent" traits, i.e., traits that do not fit traditional configurations. This is not to say that congruence is irrelevant, but that it may be overridden in the pursuit of rank. The theory therefore helps to explain why non-congruent traits are borrowed and under what conditions. Besides making this kind of cultural flexibility intelligible, the RCS provides a partial explanation of culture movements which are seen to be stimulated by the emulation-solidarity conflict.

The RCS suggests new functions for what Herskovits has referred to as reinterpretation and syncretism. Herskovits has suggested that these transformations serve in "integrating borrowed elements into a recurring culture,"[5] a valuable insight which nonetheless does not account for the borrowing of non-congruent traits. Furthermore, as Herskovits himself says, such "integration" frequently involves "new values" which change the cultural significance of old forms.[6] It would seem that cultural integration could better be maintained by rejection of non-congruent borrowing, and it would appear that "new values" could hardly be borrowed according to the configurational theory. The RCS adds considerations of social integration and rank pursuit to those of cultural integration. The transformations which occur in borrowed material are therefore seen

[5] Herskovits 1949:553.
[6] Herskovits, *ibid.*

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121 to arise from the social necessity of maintaining distinctiveness as well as the pressure of cultural integration. The borrowing of non-congruent practices and even "new values" is seen to arise from the pursuit of rank.

The RCS may also be used to supplement Park's formulation of the marginal man concept.[7] The RCS adds the dimension of social marginality to Park's cultural interpretation. Park's marginal man possesses cultural objectivity because he has experienced a culture other than his own; this experience releases him from the "cake of custom" and enables him to develop or participate in a new culture. "It is in the mind of the marginal man that the conflicting cultures meet and fuse" and where "the process of civilization may best be studied."[8] The RCS points out that identification with two societies is also at stake and that cultural choices are importantly related to this dimension of the decision. Social identification is in turn closely related to rank pursuit, and the creativity which characterizes the marginal man may, in part, result from the emulation-solidarity conflict.

Milton Singer and Fred Eggan have both called my attention to the fact there are important resemblances between the RCS and what sociologists generally refer to as the "reference group theory." Though it would be a task far beyond my present understanding to completely translate the RCS into the language of reference group theory, a few points of contact are perhaps worth mentioning. In his presentation on reference group-theory, Robert K. Merton states that a question of central importance to a developing theory of reference group behavior is "under which conditions are associates within one's

[7] Park 1928.
[8] Park 1928:881.

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own groups taken as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation, and under which conditions do out-groups or non-membership groups provide the significant frame of reference."[9] The RCS offers some possible answers to this query by pointing to the various factors which tend to increase or decrease the solidarity of a group; in particular the theory of the RCS would suggest that avenues of mobility are among the crucial determinants in choosing a reference group. Merton also raises as a central issue the question of how "divergent or even contradictory norms and standards" of different reference groups are resolved.[10] Here the RCS provides a partial answer in terms of the resolving characteristics accompanying the emulation-solidarity conflict. Obviously the language of reference group theory and its applications are far broader than that of the RCS, so that all the advantages are on the side of translating the RCS into reference group conceptual framework. Unfortunately that is a formidable task which for the present will have to remain undone.

Industrial Employment and the RCS

Not only have anthropologists overemphasized the configurational theory within the discipline but they have succeeded widely in convincing their other social science colleagues that culture is indeed nearly unshakable. At many conferences on economic development in underdeveloped areas there is an anthropologist who presents the configurational theory with a few well chosen anecdotes to make the point. A favorite supporting tale is about the Africans who filled their wheelbarrows

[9] Merton 233.
[10] Merton, *ibid.*

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121 with earth and then put them on their heads! In partial defense of such anthropologists it is well to recognize that their tales are often meant to deter overzealous non-anthropologists from insensitively smashing what to anthropologists are attractive native cultures.

The successful transference of anthropological beliefs and even configurations to other disciplines is well illustrated in Wilbert Moore's authoritative work, *Industrialization and Labor*, which deals with tribal and peasant peoples as a working force. Speaking of their ability to adapt to industrial conditions, he has this to say:

> Transference is facilitated by an overall similarity of the culture in contact, or as a corollary, by a similarity of the specific new elements and the pre-existing elements serving approximately the same goals or functions. As a practical matter of inducing cultural change, spontaneous acceptance is a function of similarity. The more unsuitable the existing circumstances the more necessary it will be to rely on slow fermentation than on rapid effervescence.[11]

While not disputing the relevance of congruence, the RCS suggests dynamics of borrowing which make it possible to understand how even pervasive configurations of a culture (such as the pleasure complex among the Santal) may be fundamentally modified. The notion of highly stable configurations which persist in spite of numerous changes in specific traits seems less applicable to societies which have conceded rank than to societies which have not. Given appropriate social circumstances, such as the separation from their own people which the Santal tend to encounter in Hindu-dominated

[11] Moore 1951:189–190.

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121 schools, one may anticipate the borrowing of basic orientations or configurations as well as specific traits. The RCS then, suggests one way in which cultures may change without remaining really the same; the anticipation of the possibility of such radical change in societies which have conceded rank is of obvious importance in understanding adaptability to economic development.

In the absence of an open political rank path, industrial employment has been shown to diminish solidarity. This decline is chiefly due to the following conditions: (1) increased education which furthers the emulation gap; (2) separate income plus migration, a combination which severs traditional ties; (3) the time demands of industrial employment; (4) dispersal of the community and inappropriate facilities in the urban environment.

In the presence of an open political rank path, industrial employment may contribute substantially to a new solidarity. This effect is chiefly the result of increased education, which makes members of the industrial community the most appropriate representatives of their community and hence those who have the most direct interest in political victory and solidarity. Since they are also likely to be among the most acculturated, it is in the industrial centers where the emulation-solidarity conflict is most intense and therefore where the center of cultural development is likely to be.

The RCS provides a tool for analyzing the prospect of recruitment and commitment of an industrial labor force from an encysted society which has conceded rank. As I have indicated elsewhere,[13] the Santal have readily made themselves available for employment at Jamshedpur since the founding

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[13] Orans 1959.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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• 121
464 of the city. Furthermore, there being no economic advantage in their making seasonal shifts from farm to industrial labor, they have been reasonably steady workers. Yet everywhere in the literature on tribals and peasants in industry there is discussion of heavy turnover and absenteeism. One of the chief causes of this unsteadiness is said to be the preference for leisure rather than increased income resulting in the traditional backward-bending supply curve for labor. Traditional Santal culture has been shown to have an unusually heavy commitment to "pleasure"; why then do the Santal not fit the stereotype of the tribal industrial worker?

To be sure, a large number of Santal must work steadily at Jamshedpur or be discharged and starve. However, figures cited here and elsewhere show that many might have remained in their native villages without unusual hardship. Perhaps it may be concluded that a sufficient condition for developing an adequate and steady labor force from tribal peoples is that it be drawn from societies which have conceded rank, assuming, of course, that pay and working conditions are adequate. Such societies will have developed strong emulative tendencies, and the consequent gap between the available economic means and the exogenous goals to be emulated (which are much more likely to require purchase, and thereby involvement in the money economy, than endogenous ones) may be wide enough to ensure considerable industrial commitment.

The switch from an exclusively economic rank path to a combined economic and political one may well result in a social and cultural movement as described. Such movements, which will be led by the elite, are likely to produce a rapid diffusion within the encysted society of emulated traits. The cultural resurgence which ensues may well result in such "revitaliza-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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• 121
464 tion" as to have a positive effect on labor morale; this was certainly evident among the Santal. In general, any increase in the probability of mobility will serve to curtail pleasure and encourage rank pursuit; no doubt the reverse is also true.

The RCS in Newly Emergent Nations

121 The RCS has special relevance to the conditions generally prevailing in newly emergent nations. By virtue of being new, if nothing else, these nations are particularly hard-pressed to establish national solidarity. At the same time these nations typically begin their independence containing a number of encysted societies, each having in various degrees maintained a separate identity. Under such tension culture is especially likely to become a tool of opposing societal interests. If there is substantial political democracy it may be anticipated that encysted societies will show strong signs of preserving their identities and maintaining and accentuating distinctive traits. If rank concession exists, such "nativism" on the part of encysted societies ought to show signs of the naturalization processes characteristic of the emulation-solidarity conflict. The dominant national society may also be expected to "use" culture, fostering and even developing, if necessary, customs to symbolize and bind together the new national solidarity. In the absence of political democracy it would seem that opportunities of economic advance in the context of a market society would favor assimilation and national solidarity; this observation, however, is by no means meant as a recommendation.

31 Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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[P. 1]

CHAPTER I

SANTAL GENESIS AND MIGRATION

(ACCORDING TO TRADITION)

The Santals form a niche in the great museum of races in India and being one of the Pre-Dravidian tribes of the Central Belt of India, an enquiry into their origin and subsequent developments, is one of the most fascinating though difficult tasks facing the student of social history. When one remembers the fact that even the history of political India is being written and rewritten in the light of new research, one can perhaps readily excuse the investigator into the pre-historic races of India, who, proceeding on insufficient and hazy data has to frame theories on the basis of myths and folk-lore and very often lands himself in mudbanks and fog.

Out of this dimness and obscurity certain facts help us with their light, as we proceed to trace the earliest history of the Santals. There is no manner of doubt that the tribe belongs to the generic Mundà family. The Santal traditions support this and the Mundà myths corroborate the assumption. So an enquiry into the origin of the Santals is inextricably blended with the rise and migration of the Mundà family till (according to their traditions) they split up into separate tribes.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1932
AW42 Santal AW42

174 In course of the following pages we intend to
• 121 give the readers an idea of these dark races of the pre-historic times in the hope that it will prove interesting.

174 *Theories of Pre-Dravidian Immigration*

Now, various conflicting theories confront us as to the earliest history of the Pre-Dravidian Mundà family. The first hypothesis deserving mention asserts that they emigrated from the now submerged hypothetical continent of Lemuria which is supposed to have connected India with Madagascar and Africa. This receives weight from the fact that European philologists have discovered distinct language affinities all over a wide belt of territory including India, Further India, Cochin China, Malay and Nicober Islands, the Philippine Islands, Malacca and Australia. The vocabulary and language-forms associate the languages spoken there with Mundari, Santali, Bhumij, Ho, Birhor, Koda, Turi, Asuri, Korwa, Kurku, Kharia, Juang, Savara, and Gadaba.[1] All these unmistakably point to a racial contact in the past, and lead Dr. Grierson to suppose that all these countries were inhabited by an old race since extinct, whose language now sur-

[113] 1. Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, *The Mundàs and their Country*, pp. 18-19.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Rights and Duties of Certain Relations

We consider it necessary to note the peculiar rights and duties of certain relatives and their mutual behaviour, as noticed in the Santal society, to enable us to understand better their kinship organisation.

1. Father

During *Chàṭiàr* (a ceremony observed as a cleansing from ceremonial defilement after childbirth) it is the father who will hold and carry the oil with which his kinsmen will rub themselves before the customary ablution. None but the father of the child can discharge this function. The reverence paid by the Santal to his father can be witnessed from his customary ancestor-worship. The average son is very obedient to his father and quarrels are rare.

2. Eldest son

The eldest son is required by custom to apply the first fire to the dead body of his father during cremation.

3. Agnates

Bhàyàds (blood-relatives to the known degrees on the father's side) must assemble at the *Chàṭiàr*, marriage and funeral ceremonies of their kin. They present *hàṇḍia* and cloths and thus lighten the burden of the feasts, to which they are treated in return according to custom.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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CHAPTER VI

TRIBAL POLITY

The expression 'polity' amongst Santals may sound paradoxical enough, but we can perhaps observe without fear of contradiction that as one studies the elements of Santal tribal government, one must wonder if one is not face to face with the essence of democracy and about to discover here a government of the people, for the people, by the people. This feature of the Santal impressed a recent Deputy Commissioner[1] of the Santal Parganas so much that he re-shuffled the Santal assemblies to suit modern conditions for a better and a more natural administration of justice and government. This reversion to the good old days was not, what might be called a success; the reasons were various: but all of them when analysed will lead to one conclusion only, the want of education and again the want of education, and not perhaps to any inherent defect of the constitution of the tribal assemblies.

We propose to examine in this chapter the mechanism of the Santal system of tribal govern-

1. Mr. Hoernle, I. C. S., Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas (1927-32).

31 Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

121 62 64 ment and the customary laws that regulate the society to illustrate our observations.

The Limbs of Law

622 (1) In villages

(i) Headman:—

The social authority in the Santal villages is exercised ordinarily by the headman, called Mañjhi, with a batch of village officials to assist him. In [651] Mayurbhanj, he is generally called the Pròdhan, an office belonging to the rural revenue-collector, who need not always be the headman (Mañjhi). Accor- [427] ding to custom he is also the *Ijardar* under a land-holder. His function is to collect rents and to allot land amongst the tenants. His office is not [423] [585] altogether honorary, for he holds free of rent parcels of *màn*[1] land and receives a fee of Re. 1 at each Santal marriage, presenting in turn a pot of rice-beer.

624 [423] (ii) *Paranik*:—He is the assistant headman also enjoying the privilege of rent-free land and having under him a third official, *Jòg-Paranik*.

(iii) *Jòg-Mañjhi*:—This interesting office belongs to a Santal for arranging tribal feasts and carousals of rice-beer, when he acts as a censor of village morals, and is called upon to exercise his

1. Land held by village officials rent-free.

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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wit and sometimes his force, to control the tipsy folk.

(iv) *Godet*:—He is a sort of an usher and bearer-in-general at the beck and call of the headman and his assistants, holding like them rent-free lands as the privilege of his office.

(v) *Naeke* and *Cudam Naeke*: —Added to the fore-going, the ecclesiastical functions of the tribe are exercised by the *Naeke* (village-priest) and his assistant, whose special function is to propitiate the hill-spirits.

(2) Inter-village organization:—

The rural units, on their turn, are federated into a number of larger groups, each under the supervision (as we saw in Mayurbhanj) of a Desh-Pradhan, whose special function, we shall soon notice.

On the top of this, these federal units are co-ordinated under the superintendence of a Santal over-chief, called *Pargana* having a varying area of the country under his jurisdiction, over which according to immemorial custom, he is the supreme head.

The special function of these tribal offices will be explained in detail in course of this chapter; and it is time that we should deal with the village assembly, a wonderful relic of ancient India embedded in the Santal tribal jurisprudence, serving

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

121 623 as the right hand of the headman in the exercise of his office.

Village-assembly and its powers and functions

622 623 Social authority in village is exercised by the Headman, but always in consultation with the "Mòɲɽèn hòɽ" (*panchayet*) who were originally five in number. At present the number is not so fixed. It comprises the village elders representing all the households. When any question for decision comes, the Headman or in his absence the *Paranik*, receives the complaint. If the matter is simple [624] enough, it is decided immediately by the Headman with the help of the "Mòɲɽèn hòɽ," the members of whom are summoned by the village official, *gòḍet*. If the case involves knotty questions of 622 623 692 tribal law, a date is fixed for decision when the parties adduce oral evidence and after due consideration, judgment is pronounced by the Headman.

To take a concrete case, supposing a man has been seriously wounded by another man's buffalo. In such a case tribal laws require the accused to pay a money compensation to the complainant. These judgments are bound to be obeyed and breaches are rare. After the judgment, there is a custom of a money payment being made to the judges by the accused, to be spent by them in feasts and drinks. In some areas, as in the *sadar* sub-division of Mayur-

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

[P.186]

CHAPTER VII

FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

121 If at any moment mankind has thought and felt that there must be "more things in heaven and earth" than dreamt of by one's philosophy, it is at the cross roads of life, such as births, marriages and deaths. Whence comes this life, by what ceremonials will the married couple's life progress to their mutual well-being and, as members of the big human society, by what processes can we on earth ensure the peace, if not the happiness, of the departed spirit? These are questions that have deeply affected human thought, civilized or uncivilized. It is to tackle these problems that the Santals have recourse to elaborate ceremonials, to bring luck to them, and to propitiate their gods and goddesses, so that the malevolent powers may be shorn of their malign influence and the benevolent may protect them.

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In the next few pages, we propose to deal with the ceremonies as observed by the Santals to ward off unknown dangers, and to feel at ease that something has been done to propitiate the deities.

844 *Birth*

When a baby is coming to a Santal family, no new shed is erected as a lying-in room, but any

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

[P. 310] MAYURBHANJ

CHAPTER XI

SANTAL FOLK-LORE

121 From the very dawn of human society, man has tried to explain the mysteries of creation and life by means of stories. This is true both of civilized and unlettered folk who sought thereby to throw some light on inexplicable phenomena by weaving tales round them to satisfy the hunger for knowledge. 121 We are not out here to trace the origin of myths 538 and legends, but wish to introduce to the reader the wealth of Santal folk-lore with the idea that it might illuminate the dim recesses of the Santal mind, and show how they think and feel in the presence of the baffling mysteries of life and how they interpret them.

538 Just like the grand-mother of the Bengali household, the Old Mañjhi of the Santal villages is the repository of these tales. Men, old and young, gather round him in moments of leisure and listen to him in rapt attention as he tells his stories seasoning them with flashes of humour, propounding riddles to the listeners and by adorning the stories with morals as the experience of his ripe old age.

[128] In course of the following pages we shall give [126] the readers a collection of such tales as gathered by us at Mayurbhanj.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
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APPENDIX I

SEX LIFE OF THE SANTAL

• 121 In course of the previous chapters, we have given the readers an idea of the Santal's life in general. We feel, however, that to probe deeply into the instinctive principles that govern the life of the tribe, we should deal with their sex-life in some detail. Rev. Verrier Elwin in his "The Baiga" and Dr. Firth in his account of the Tikopia have given admirable glimpses of this side of the tribes they have reviewed and knowing well how in these days, anthropologists like to get acquainted with the sprouting and development of the sex-instinct, with the scientist's belief that "where the sex is impure there are no flowers in nature," we take courage in both hands to place before the reader the results of our investigations amongst the Mayurbhanj Santals on the subject.

The dawn of the instinct

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[996] "Children are equipped with a complete phallic knowledge by Cando Boṅga (Supreme Deity). It is ordained by him as to whether a man will have progeny or not; so we find some men are denied children, although they mate like others," said an old Santal to us. They want children; they like children. Overpopulation, a dismal apprehension

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[Introductory, P. Xi]

PREFACE

This book is an attempt to give a systematic account of the manners and customs, laws and government, religious beliefs, origin and ethnological affinities of the Santals of the Santal Parganas. 121

The author from 1931 to 1934 collected most of his data from twenty-two villages of the different Damin areas of the Santal Parganas. Later on in 1944 and 1945 he paid occasional visits to some villages outside Damin also. He is of the opinion that not much appreciable change had taken place within the following years of the Santals of the Santal Parganas. 114 [178]

In this book the author has not devoted a great deal to matters which have already been fully described in authoritative works such as folklore, folk songs, Santal disease, medicine and language. 121

The author gladly takes this opportunity to record his grateful thanks to many colleagues who have helped him with valued suggestions and criticisms. He is particularly indebted to the late Dr. Panchanan Mitra, former Head of the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, who helped him by giving valued suggestions and encouragement. To Mr. D. Rangiya and Mr. J.D. Mehra, thanks are due for the revision of the proof sheets. Many others have helped but the following names may be specially mentioned viz: Mr. I.P.S. Monga, Mr. S.C. Tiwari, Mr. A. Sharma, Mr. P.N. Gulati, Mr. K. Guha, Mr. H.L. Seth (Artist) and Mr. J.D. Mavalwala.

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4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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CHAPTER III

The Santal Social Organization

Family: The family amongst the Santals should be of great interest considering that the Santals have been described as polyandrous. But besides the privileges of the younger brother over an elder brother's wife or the latitude allowed to the husband with the wife's younger sisters, there ought to have been traces of at least what has been called group-marriage. As the Santals could be taken as the representatives of a state of culture preceding the Dravidians in India and so be taken as a type of primitive patriliny, theoretically it should have shown the stages of family life which Morgan has described to be of pre-Aryan type. Linguistically, the Santals belong to what has been called the Austric group and thus would be the westernmost peripheral representatives of what is the Hawaiian type of family in the Pacific. In social structure also as well as in a sort of totemic organization the Santals recall several features of the Australian aboriginals. So an inquiry into the Santal family organization compared with the Hawaiian types or Australian systems or the polyandrous Nair or Tibetan types is necessary.

Types of Family: Amongst the Santal generally two types of family can be seen :

(1) The individual family consisting of father, mother, sons and daughters.

(2) The second consisting of grandfather, grandmother, sons, their wives, daughters (unmarried)

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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SANTAL PARGANAS

CHAPKR IV

Santal Laws and Government

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It is too early yet to disentangle the various cultural elements which have set their stamp on the village organisation of different parts of India. Socio-economists and students of primitive law are greatly indebted to Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee for trying to pierce through the veil that surrounds the beginnings of Indian primitive political and judicial institutions by a culture-strata analysis. In his illuminating paper[1] he first of all describes the system in which perhaps most primitive elements have survived such as the Khond type, mainly characterised by tribal system in a village. The second, the more advanced type, is to be found according to him among the Mundas and the Oraons of Chota Nagpur characterised by tribal government and an agrarian distribution under centralised control. A still more advanced type would be that found among village communities of Malabar with democratic tribal traditions overlaid by feudal and monarchical tribal tendencies and found in all complexities amongst the most interesting matriarchal Nayars, though there are many patrirachal tribes in Cochin, Travancore and Coorg. Lastly came the fourth type, the Indo-Aryan. The Munda-Dravidian village constitution is contrasted with the Indo-Aryan system. Later on he has found out another type which he calls Mongoloid (which might be termed the Assam type) and he has further differentiated the Indo-Aryan type from

[1] R.K. Mukerjee, Village Communities in India, Man in India, Vol. III, 1923.pp.1-27.

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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SANTAL PARGANAS

• 121 174 171 N.W. India into the Afghan and Beluchi sub-types. Thus we have the regional economic types of (1) Assam, (2) Chota Nagpur, (3) Malabar, and Madras (4) and N.W. India, which possibly spread over the rest of India along with Aryan conquest and colonisation. It is quite likely that there would be many sub-types in each. In the Festschrift presented to Pater Schmidt, we have a division of the cultural strata of India into the Ur-folk of Palaeolithic time, the Dravidians with Neolithic shoulder-celt culture and the Aryans with copper or iron, succeeding each other chronologically. Giuffrida-Ruggeri's ethnic stratification of India gives us the Negritos, the Australoid Vedda, Dravidians and different Indo-Aryan races succeeding each other chronologically. Prof. Von Eickstedt's classification gives us interesting zonal ethnic types such as (1) the Veddoid, or Palaeo-Indian, the most primitive group with two varieties namely Malidae from Northern jungles and Gondidae from Central Province and Chota Nagpur, and (2) the non-Negroid Melanid group with the sub-type of Kolidae followed by two advanced groups of Indidae and Brachydae.

Thus a cultural analysis of a Santal village administration would pave the way for a clear understanding of the economic and political stratification and their history and evolution in ancient India and what was the real contribution of the Assam, Chota Nagpur or Malabar and Madras or N.W. Indian type to it. The Santal type follows closely what has been described as Mnuda-Oraon constitution; as the Santals are linguistically and culturally, if not physically closely akin to the Mundas, Hos, etc., though the Oraons are linguistically quite different.

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PREFACE

THIS study represents an attempt to provide the kind of book that I wish could have been placed in my hands when I first began to work among the Santals. It is based very largely on material gathered during my residence in the village of Sarenga, District Bankura, between October 1932 and April 1943. Much of what is said is true of the Santals wherever they are found. The uniformity of Santal culture over a wide area raises questions of great interest to students, but no attempt has been made to deal with them here. Nor have I attempted to deal with the wider questions involved in the problem of the Christian approach to peoples living in small-scale societies, though I hope that I may have been able to supply some data relevant to the discussion. We missionaries are at times impatient of the strictures of anthropologists, but we would do well to heed the warning of such a missionary as Dr. Kraemer when he says: "Missions make the claim, on account of their religious aim, that Christianity contains the forces of moral and spiritual regeneration so sorely needed in this time of disintegration. It is encouraging to read twice, for instance, in Monica Hunter's *Reaction to Conquest* that Christianity proves able to supply a new invigorating moral basis of life. Yet missions ought always to be mindful that this does not result *mechanically* from the acceptance of Christianity, but that to achieve it there is need for a constant application to the task of religious, moral, cultural and social education—and this must be inspired by the desire *to serve the true interests of the people.*"[1]

I count it among the more fortunate circumstances of my life that my first five years were spent at Pakur in the Santal Parganas; the investigations then begun perhaps helped to shape my outlook! During the years at Sarenga I came to owe a great debt to many individual Santals. Three men in particular helped by placing their knowledge at my disposal, and most of the statements in this book have been checked more than once in the course of many conversations with them. The late Ernest Soren was for many years headmaster of the Boys' School at Sarenga; he became a Christian in early manhood and was held in high regard by all who knew him, yet he never

[1] H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World*, London, 1938, p. 436. The italics are the author's.

1: Orans

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/For the theory of the RCS (rank concession syndrome), see category 116, pp. ix-xiv; 123-146./